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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL ECON IR NL

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/IRAN: MFA REPORTING FROM TEHRAN

Classified By: Political Deputy Eric Falls for reasons 1.5(b,d)

**¶1. (C) SUMMARY:** The Iranian and EU governments have exchanged protests, including a second formal protest by the Dutch MFA to the Iranian Charge d'Affaires in The Hague. Tehran is looking for splits in the EU position. The Dutch proposed and expect an EU meeting on June 26 to maintain unity. Since June 20, the Dutch officials have seen only relatively small Tehran protests. END SUMMARY

**¶2. (C) DUTCH, EUROPEAN, AND IRANIAN REACTIONS:** In conversations June 24 and 26, Loek Ten Hagen, Dutch MFA Iran desk officer, shared observations from his ministry and the Dutch embassy in Tehran with Post. While FM Verhagen was abroad this weekend, the MFA called in the Iranian Charge d'Affaires for a second time. Political Affairs DG De Gooijer protested that singling out the United Kingdom, and to some extent France, was unreasonable, and de Gooijer expressed the unity of the EU member states in addition to protesting the treatment of the protesters and the violent crackdowns initiated by the GOI. The Iranian CDA responded by attacking BBC and CNN news and Radio Zameneh for their coverage of events in Iran. (Note: Radio Zameneh is an independent broadcaster in Amsterdam that receives some funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. End Note.) The Iranian CDA also stated that they had proof that Britain was interfering with Iranian internal affairs.

**¶3. (C)** In Tehran, when the Dutch Ambassador was called in to meet the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, Mehdi Safari, he was shown a "completely unconvincing" photo with a western (apparently British) man meeting with British officials.

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Iran was looking for splits in the EU position. Ten Hagen opined that if this trend continues, it is possible that Iran may expel some EU ambassadors. To reinforce solidarity and discuss future options, FM Verhagen has proposed a side meeting of EU ministers on June 26.

**¶4. (C)** The Dutch MFA is considering further sanctions against Iran. Ten Hagen suggested that visa restrictions might be one option, but the reaction of the Dutch will depend on the reaction of the opposition and public in Iran.

**¶5. (C) CONTROLS AND VIOLENCE:** After the June 20 protests, the Dutch officials have noted only smaller protests. GOI authorities harshly suppressed a small demonstration with approximately 1,000 people on Monday, and a protest of 7,000 on Wednesday. The roads to the central square of Tehran are heavily restricted to keep protesters away. There are rumors of increasing controls in areas around foreign embassies and questioning of people who go near them, especially those interviewing for visa applications. The Dutch have also heard that people coming into the country are being heavily questioned and scrutinized.

**¶6. (C) LOCATION OF MOUSAVI UNKNOWN:** The Dutch have no idea where presidential candidate Mousavi is or what he is doing.

A political compromise with Mousavi and fellow candidate Kharroubi is now as unlikely as ever. The news says that

Mousavi is now asking for an independent committee to examine the election results. There are "very speculative" rumors that former president Rafsanjani is trying to organize a coup. Such a coup would only have a chance of working with the backing of the Revolutionary Guard.

¶7. (C) THEORIES ON IRANIAN POLITICS: The Dutch Ambassador told Ten Hagen that Khamenei wanted Ahmedinejad to win the election. Khamenei saw Khatami, with his experience and support in the reformist movement, as a threat to regime stability. Khamenei most likely thought Mousavi posed no threat. The Dutch Ambassador also suggested there will be no liberalization of Iran's government in the near term, given the crises Iran now faces.

GALLAGHER